

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3925

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 12752

STADIS//////////

FOR AMBASSADORS BUNKER AND LINOWITZ FROM AMBASSADOR LUCEY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN, MX

SUBJECT: PANAMA CANAL BRIEFING FOR FOREIGN MINISTER ROEL

1. BARKLEY AND HOWARD ACCOMPANIED ME TO BRIEFING OF MEXICAN FOREIGN MINISTER ROEL TODAY ON THE STATUS OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS IN PREPARATION FOR LOPEZ PORTILLO'S PARTICIPATION IN BOGOTA MEETING OF SELECT LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTS ON AUGUST 5. ROEL PROVED FAMILIAR WITH GENERAL BACKGROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS INCLUDING 1974 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND THRESHHOLD AGREEMENTS, BUT WAS SPECIFICALLY INTERESTED IN DEVELOPMENTS SINCE PRESIDENT CARTER TOOK OFFICE AND STATUS OF REMAINING ISSUES. BARKLEY EXPLAINED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL AD REFERENDUM AGREEMENTS REACHED DURING MAY NEGOTIATING SESSION ON DURATION, NEUTRALITY AND THE FORM OF THE ENTITY, AND ELABORATED ON REMAINING DIFFERENCES ON QUESTIONS OF LANDS AND WATERS, AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS. ROEL, WHO TOOK CAREFUL NOTES, SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE UNITED STATES' VIEWS
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ON THE UNRESOLVED ISSUES AND APPEARED PARTICULARLY SYMPATHETIC TO OUR POSITION THAT THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR PANAMA BE DERIVED FROM CANAL GENERATED REVENUES. HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD BEEN MOST GENEROUS IN MEETING PANAMA'S REQUIREMENTS ON THE KEY ISSUES, IMPLYING HE WOULD PASS THAT VIEW ON TO LOPEZ PORTILLO.

2. ROEL ADDED THAT HE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WE COULD PROVIDE HIM BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR BOGOTA, PARTICULARLY REGARDING REMAINING PROBLEMS IN ECONOMIC MATTERS AND LANDS AND WATERS. ON LATTER POINT HE SAID A GENERAL MAP OF THE CANAL ZONE AREA KEYED TO HIGH IMPACT CONCESSIONS WE HAVE MADE TO PANAMA WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL.

3. ROEL WAS MOST INTERESTED IN CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARD A NEW TREATY. WE EXPLAINED THAT THE TREATY DID NOT APPEAR AT THIS MOMENT TO HAVE THE REQUISITE SUPPORT IN CONGRESS. WE WERE HOPEFUL, HOWEVER, THAT THE SENATE EVENTUALLY WOULD AGREE TO SUPPORT A TREATY THAT DEMONSTRABLY PROTECTED U.S. COMMERCIAL AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE CANAL. WE POINTED TO THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO A NEW, MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE, TREATY IN THE FACE OF CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION. ROEL SAID HE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE TREATY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND SAID THAT IT WAS A VERY IMPORTANT POINT TO BE MADE IN BOGOTA. HE FURTHER IMPLIED HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO COUNSEL LATIN AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNITED STATES' POSITIONS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. LUCEY

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